The Sin of Book-Borrowing

By "IAN MACLAREN,"

(Author of "The Bonnie Brier Bush," etc.)

A NUMBER OF REASONS SET FORTH WITH MUCH FORCE AND FEELING WHY ONE WHO WISHES TO READ A BOOK SHOULD BUY, NOT BORROW, IT.

As I wish to make a serious plea with those innumerable, tax-paying, church-going and highly respectable people who will, at any cost of waiting and humiliation, borrow a book, even a book of permanent value, instead of buying it, and as such people are accustomed to have their sins dealt with under heads, let me point out four reasons why a self-respecting person, who has a few shillings to spare, and interest enough to read a book, should buy a book instead of borrowing. And the first is that he may not sin against its owner, for if any one lends a book, even to his dearest friend, and a person of the highest character, there is a large risk that he will never see it again. People always return an umbrella which has been lent them on a wet day, and very often at least they repay money which they have asked for in a strait, but it is a high degree of virtue when they bring back your books. Books do not seem to be property unless you happen to have bought them, or they are lying in a bookseller's shop. If they belong to your neighbor they seem in some mysterious way to be the capital of the commonwealth, and if they drift from his possession to yours, there is no necessity they should be sent back. The sight of the man's hat, or his coat, to say nothing of his purse, in your room, would make you miserable, and if you used them would suggest the police. But a book! Well, it slipped in among your own, and the housemaid, possessed by the spirit of tidiness, finally arranged it in an obscure place on your shelves or in your bookcase, or you liked it so much that it grew familiar to you, and you began to wonder whether it had not been your own all the time; or there was no name on the book—some people hating to have their books like dogs with a collar—and so you didn't know where to restore it. If the owner be a very business-like and straight-forward person he will remember that he lent the book to you—there are persons who are said to keep the names and addresses of all borrowers, but in the course of a varied life I have never met one. The chances, however, are that although the owner will miss his book he will not be sure who has got it, or if he is he may not have the courage to demand it. It is many years ago since an eminent man, an ecclesiastical leader and doctor of divinity, and one who spoke to me plainly concerning my many faults, borrowed a copy of our chief woman poet in two volumes, that condescending from great affairs he might cast a careless eye over her work on a railway journey, and the book was to be returned to me within a moderate season. Perhaps it was not wonderful that amidst great affairs he should forget the debt to an obscure person, but I missed my book and, sitting in the great man's study, entered into the mind of Naboth, when I saw my lamb amid the flock of sheep, round his room. There was not in me courage enough to remind him of the loan, and so I fell on the weak expedient of bringing conversation round to that particular poet, and asking if one ought to study her. It pleased me much to hear the great man commend her work, and to express his surprise that I had not a copy. He gave me some little advice on the formation of a library, and all the time my eyes turned to the book which had left me forever, and I saw a new way of forming a library. There is no plan of insuring the return of a book after it has passed into some peoples' hands, except stamping every hundredth page, as they do in circulating libraries, with your name and address, and after you have done that you would be quite willing that the borrower should keep the book forever.

And another reason against borrowing books is that one may not sin, for I am now speaking to a woman, against her own family. Careful house mothers congratulate themselves upon two virtues; one is that they save money by borrowing instead of buying books, and the other is that they take every means to protect their families from infection. Do they understand that the one virtue absolutely neutralizes the other? This good woman will not enter the door of a house where there is the mildest infectious disease; she will cross the street if she sees a lady approaching whose children had chicken pox a month ago; she will be furious at any one who calls from a home where a child has whooping cough, and she does not like the idea of a clergyman visiting her, after being in a house where there is typhoid fever lest he should bring it in on his coat tails. So nervous, so careful, so devoted is the good mother. But, instead of buying a nice, clean, wholesome, harmless book for the reading of her family, she will wait six weeks till her turn comes for the same book at a circulating library, and it does not matter how dirty it may be, she will give it cheerfully to her boy to read or will read it herself with gusto. Does the excellent and economical woman not know that the book is very likely a pesthouse of disease, simply jumping with chicken pox, measles, scarlet fever and other horrors? Let me assure my friend that an author is deeply concerned when he thinks that the book which he intended to be a help to human life has become a source of sanitary danger. The author is told by his scientific friends that microbes are everywhere, and he is haunted with the thought that his innocent book may be simply plastered with the germs of disease. He would, therefore, take this opportunity of respectfully suggesting to every mother who is in the custom of borrowing books, that his particular book, before it be read, should be placed in a bath of carbolic acid—the leaves being opened so that the disinfectant may reach every page, and then that it be dried at the fire, and after that the book be given freely for reading to the members of the family. This advice I offer through a spirit of philanthropy, but with considerable diffidence ever since a lady said to me lately, "would not this make the book very disagreeable and unpleasant to read?" and I was obliged to confess that it would. And when she then said "that it might be better in those circumstances to buy a copy for oneself," I felt that if the sense of humor in a woman is not so fully developed as in a man, this lady was able at least to arrive at a reasonable conclusion. Would it not be cheaper—this is my point—and safer to spend more money at the bookseller's than at the chemist's, and to take as much care that disease should not come into the house through dirty books as a lady takes to avoid infected persons?

Book-borrowing is also a sin against a struggling and deserving class of toilers. I refer, although with much diffidence, to authors. Every one who knows anything about writing men is aware that, with a few exceptions, they live on the borderland of poverty, but it is the rooted conviction of a credulous public that they are rolling in riches. If an author's novel is in the tenth thousand, the intelligent public makes a rapid calculation, multiplying 10,000 shillings by six, and reducing shillings to pounds, and finally assigning him the entire nominal value of his book, without allowing anything to the printer, publisher, paper-maker, bookbinder, or any other partner in the production of the book, and also crediting the author with the 13 pence discount which the public has refused to pay. Some day the millennium for authors may come, when all the other partners will do their work for nothing, and the public will insist on paying the full 6 shillings as a tribute of respect, but the day has not yet broken, and the night at present is dark. Perhaps the public is deceived by the remarkable pictures which are drawn by interviewers, who by a convention of their craft, when they visit an author, describe his four-room cottage as a gentleman's country place, and the pony which brought the man from London to the house as a pair of spanking thoroughbreds, and the modest chop and rice pudding, which is all the author could offer, as a lord mayor's feast, with French names for the dishes. It is simply the custom of the trade, but when one of its masters will finally suggest that he could hardly induce the author to speak about books at all because he, that is the author, was so taken up with his stables, and his hounds, and his shooting, and his orchids, one must make some excuse for a trustful public. As a matter of fact, and always excepting two or three men, the author hardly knows how to make both ends meet, and if a lady only knew how much depended on a book being bought and not loaned, their tender and beneficent hearts would never allow them to borrow again. Buying instead of borrowing for one month, might mean butcher's meat in a poor novelist's house for a week and surely the sight of his hungry children may well rise before the Christian imagination. This is, however, a side of book-buying so personal and so affecting that his feelings do not allow the writer to dwell upon it at greater length.

And I am moved to point out, as the preachers say finally, which in their case usually means half way through, that borrowing is likely to end in sin against the books themselves. Can you conceive the feeling of a book which does not belong to the "submerged tenth," but has lived in respectable circumstances, when it finds itself in certain, thoughtless and uncivilized hands? The hands of those who borrow and will not buy. Can that book expect, I will not say courtesy, can it expect even decency from such people? They have no idea of the respect due to a book nor the consideration which it deserves. If it be not cut up they will perform this most delicate operation with anything, a steel knife, a railway ticket, or on emergency their own fingers. They will mark the place where they stopped reading by turning down half a dozen leaves, or by pressing the open book face down against the table; they will make insane notes on the margin, and in extreme cases will even extra illustrate the book. They will use the book as a fire screen to keep the heat from their faces, or as a pillow on which to sleep, or a pedestal on which to stand a flower pot, or as a block of wood to keep a door open. Any place and any use is good enough for a book when it is sold into slavery among the barbarians. It is indeed one of the last acts of trust you can put in a person to lend him a well-printed and well-bound book. There are not many worthy of such a confidence, and it is a question whether any bookman should ever allow his fine editions to go out, or whether any other bookman should ever wish to have the responsibility of their charge. It is a pleasant sight, when it does happen, to see the care with which the one book lover will receive the cherished volume from the other, as if it were the charge of a child which he was taking. And the anxiety with which he will wrap up the calf or morocco that neither rain nor dust may touch it, and the vigilance with which he will watch over it in his own study, and then the flush of gratitude with which, at the end of the appointed time, for a period will be fixed for the visit of this child, he will restore it to its parent, and proudly demand a full quittance because he has brought it back without spot or wrinkle or any such thing.

Next Week: "He that Is Least."

IN THE GOSSIP'S CORNER.

Last week we considered, in connection with the proposition to install a sewage farm for the use of Indianapolis, the disposal of sewage in its broader aspects; recognizing the necessity existing for an effective and sanitary method; considering briefly the dangers and nuisances arising from the discharge of sewage into rivers; conceding the theoretical perfection of the land treatment of sewage disposal, and discussing briefly some of the general objections, both operative and sanitary, to this method. This brought us down to the hygienic aspects of the land-irrigation system, which you will recall I alluded to under three heads, i. e., (1) offensive and injurious emanations, (2) pollution of subsoil water and (3) distribution of undefecated sewage containing the ova of entozoa. Let us consider these in detail here.

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There is ample evidence of the offensive and injurious emanations from sewage farms. The strongest possible citations may be made of the experiences of the cities of Great Britain and the continent, where the system has been longest in use. The river pollution commissioners of England admit that odors do arise from land irrigated with sewage, day after day, for years. The Craigentinny meadows, near Edinburgh, can only be described as filthy, says their report. The reports of successive surgeons at the barracks adjoining the meadows describe the stench as "sickening." Of the Croydon sewage farm at Beddington, Dr. Creasy, surgeon at the Beddington Orphan Asylum, reported that "typhoid fever had been in every cottage on the estate, every case assuming a particular type, accompanied by what is called a 'sewage tongue.'" Dr. Clouston traced an outbreak of dysentery in the Cumberland and Westmoreland Asylum to the effluvia from a sewage farm.

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Dr. Tidy quotes and agrees with Copland's statement that sewer gases are never so bad as when emitted from sewage spread out upon the land. It is because solid matter is given off during evaporation. As the turpentine in lead paint is evaporating, solid lead carbonate is carried into the air, and produces lead poisoning among the inmates of freshly painted houses. This is not because of the volatility of the lead, but because of the mechanical dislodgment of lead particles during the evaporation of the volatile constituents of the paint. When the smell has gone the danger is passed. So it is with sewage. Hawksley says: "Water irrigation carried on in warm weather is exceedingly unhealthy. I can speak positively, from repeated observation in different places, that the odor, particularly at night and particularly on still, damp evenings in autumn, is very sickly indeed, and that in all these cases a great deal of disease prevails. The sewage forms a deposit on the surface of the ground; that deposit forms a cake of organic matter, and organic matter, when it is in a damp state, as it usually is, gives off, in warm weather, a most odious stench."

Buchanan, in his masterly research, has shown that phthisis is more prevalent where there is a wet atmosphere than where there is a dry one, and Pottenkofer, of Munich, regards fever and cholera as dependent on fluctuations in the level of ground water charged with sewage. Dr. Sturge, in a paper before the Institution of Surveyors (in England the city engineer is called the surveyor), said that 70 per cent. of the houses in Paris have cesspools, and from the remaining 30 per cent. the solid matter is not allowed to enter the sewers. Of the 60,000,000 gallons daily of Paris sewage, 10,000,000 gallons were treated on 214 acres of land at Gennevilliers. This land has about five inches of alluvial soil resting on ten feet of sand and gravel. Laying aside the question of the success or nonsuccess of the farm in its commercial aspect, it is to be noted that the value of building land in the vicinity has decreased, and the health of the inhabitants has suffered from a rise in the level of subsoil water. On Page 153 of his report on the Paris sewers, Dr. Sturge says: "Great complaints have been made that since the introduction of the irrigation, ague has become far more common than it was before, and more deaths occur from diarrhoea and dysentery."

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One thing is abundantly evident, viz., that it is impossible to secure a pure effluent by an irrigation process. Land covered with a vigorous crop of growing vegetation is totally different from land on which no vegetation is growing. Land under the influences of summer warmth and active evaporation is different from what it is in times of frost or snow. Land flooded with heavy rains is not the same as it is in dry weather. Inequality of purification—at one time good, at another doubtful, at another absolutely useless—is the record of land irrigation wherever it has been tried. The sewage comes every day to be treated, and no earthly power can say whether the farm is or will be in condition to treat it. And more than this, the very condition that increases the quantity of sewage to be dealt with (such as heavy rains), also is the condition that temporarily disables the land. And yet again, the condition that increases the bulk of the sewage, or at any rate its polluting character—the population—is that condition which makes costly the land in the neighborhood, and may make it impossible to procure at any price.

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Having touched upon the pollution of subsoil water in connection with the subject of emanations from sewage farms, there remains only the necessity, in re the former matter, to cite the report of the parliamentary special committee on the sewage of towns that "if the power of the soil be overtaxed (that is, if too much sewage be applied), there must, of necessity, be injury to wells and running streams." This report was accompanied by citations from the reports of local conditions at many of the English and Scotch towns where sewage farms are maintained.

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Every medical practitioner recognizes the fact that entozoic diseases have an external origin—i. e., that the ova or parasites come from without, and are not generated within, the human body. Millions of ova are voided with every segment discharged by the person afflicted with tapeworm, each ovum being capable of producing a measle in the flesh of an animal, and each measle a tapeworm in the body of a man. The late Dr. Tidy said he had seen watercresses and celery grown on sewage ground, having a quantity of dried sewage matter deposited on the stems. "I have," he said, "with more than a cook's patience, tried to wash this matter off, but the tenacity with which it sticks upon the surface of the vegetable when once dry is perfectly astounding. Be it remembered that watercresses and celery are eaten uncooked."

Sewage always contains excremental ova. The grass covered with sewage, eaten, as it is, with rapacity by the cattle, infects their bodies with the larval parasite. Thus the meat is measly, and measly meat, except for efficient cooking, means tapeworm to the human subject. Perhaps a similar story might be told of trichina, with its ten times greater danger. No doubt, as an accident, the danger is constant, but sewage irrigation would practically render it an affair of certainty. Dr. Cobbold, another English expert, pertinently asks: "May we not, indeed, but too reasonably conjecture that the wholesale distribution of tapeworm eggs, by the utilization of sewage on a stupendous scale, will tend to spread abroad a class of diseases, some of which are exceedingly formidable? I am firmly convinced of the truth embodied in an affirmative reply to this query. I am certain that parasites are propagated in this particular way, and I surely see unpleasant results if no steps are taken to counteract the evil. The whole question is, in truth, of vast hygienic importance."

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We have now to review the facts heretofore set forth; to consider some of the practical difficulties which will be in the way of the installation and operation of a sewage farm, and to cite some of the experiences of communities that are operating them, noting matters of cost and completeness or incompleteness of results attained, but again I must crave your patience for another week. The subject is well worthy of all the consideration we can give it, and if we shall digest what has been before set forth we shall be in a receptive state of mind for that that is to come.

THE GOSSIP.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

On what date did Bill Nye, the humorist, die?—E. A. B.

Feb. 22, 1896.

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Does the law passed in the State of New York providing for contract marriage require a divorce in case persons so married should separate?—Reader.

It does.

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Was General French captured by the Boers, and where is he?—C. K.

No; he has been commander of the First Army Corps at Aldershot, England, since October, 1901.

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Are shorthorn and Durham cattle the same?—H. H.

Yes; both names are applied to shorthorns, the County of Durham, in England, being regarded as the herd's starting place.

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Which has the greater area, Canada or the United States, and is Alaska included?—E. L. Z.

Including Alaska the United States has the greater area; without Alaska the reverse is true.

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Who is President of Argentine Republic? 2. Where can I get information as to the climate and opportunities of that country?—Baker.

Julio A. Roca. 2. At the Bureau of American Republics, Washington, D. C.

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What crimes are punishable in Texas by death?—C. P. B.

Murder, rape and perjury to a material fact in a capital case; a trial court may substitute life imprisonment for the death penalty.

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How many different languages are there?—Little Girl.

Adelung put their number, including dialects, at 3,424, and noted that 937 were Asiatic, 587 European, 276 African and 1,624 American and dialects.

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How many district schools in Indiana are located on cross-section lines, with but one dirt road for convenience?—T. E.

We cannot say. Write to the superintendent of public instruction, Indianapolis, for information on the subject.

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Where can I find a short sketch of Andrew Carnegie?—O. E. L.

In the Review of Reviews (American) for April, 1900; also in a book by O. S. Marden, entitled "How They Succeeded," published by D. Lothrop & Co., Boston.

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Where does Mr. H. C. Warmoth reside? He was Governor of Louisiana shortly after the civil war.—Jane.

His residence was for many years at Magnolia plantation, Plaquemines parish, Louisiana, and may be there yet.

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Was Guiteau, assassin of President Garfield, electrocuted or hanged? 2. Who was the first person electrocuted by law in the United States?—O.

He was hanged. 2. A New York murderer named Kemmler, executed at Auburn, Aug. 6, 1890.

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Is there any 5-cent United States silver money, and do they mint any now?—F. A. B.

The silver half-dime was authorized in 1792 and its coinage was not discontinued by law until 1873, though it practically ceased several years previously.

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Did the Custer massacre occur in Wyoming, Montana or Dakota? Are the Little Big Horn and the Big Horn the same rivers?—S. M. B.

In southern Montana, near the Little Big Horn, and not very far from where that stream joins the Big Horn, of which it is a branch.

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What will remove the marks on the neck due to high collars and furs?—A. M.

Apply lemon juice, and after it has remained for a few minutes wash with warm water and soap. As the lemon is a bit harsh, it is well to conclude with cold cream or the like.

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If the pole star is forty-two light units from us, had it shone forty-two years before being visible here, and should it disappear, would it be forty-two years before its light would disappear?—J. M. V.

You state the theory of the matter rightly; of course, no one has positive knowledge of these points.

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What takes the place of wire in the Marconi system of wireless telegraphy?—J. L. C.

That hypothetical medium, ether, which is credited with marked tenuity and elasticity, and with being the medium by which light and heat are transmitted. This is theory, of course, but one that is generally accepted by scientists.

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Has there ever been in the United States army an officer with higher rank than lieutenant general? If so, what was the rank and who were they?—J. W.

Yes. Washington was commissioned "general of the armies of the United States." In 1866 the rank of general was created for U. S. Grant, and on his becoming President W. T. Sherman became general.

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Who is Vinnie Ream Hoxie?—B. E. B.

A sculptor, the wife of Major Richard L. Hoxie, United States army, and a resident of Washington. She was born in Madison, Wis., in 1847, and when fifteen received a commission to execute a life-size statue of President Lincoln. Later Congress commissioned her to make a bust of Admiral Farragut. She has made, besides, many statues and busts of nobilities.

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Just before the Greco-Persian war the Egyptians were employed in spanning the Hellespont with a bridge; was Egypt under Persia at that time? 2. Where was Mount Athos?—H. B. M.

Yes; Cambyses subdued Egypt in 525 B. C., and the Persian domination lasted until 400 B. C. At the time you mention the Egyptians contributed largely to Xerxes's fleet and army. 2. In eastern Greece.

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Was the trade dollar, when first issued, a legal tender for any amount not exceeding $5? Is it now a legal tender with said limitation? If not, by what legal enactment did it lose its said legal tender quality?—H. D.

It was not originally meant for circulation in the United States, but for use in China and the East, but unintentionally became a legal tender in this country to the amount of $5, with other subsidiary coins of the government. Its legal tender quality was taken away by the act of July 22, 1873.

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What is the average rainfall of North Dakota, South Dakota, Minnesota, Iowa and Oklahoma? 2. Which of the above can produce good crops with the least rain? 3. Can corn be profitably raised in Oklahoma?—T.

The yearly average in inches of rain and melted snow is, in your order, 16, 26.8, 25, 34 and 31. 2. Iowa, probably. 3. Yes; Oklahoma's farmers put yearly over half a million acres in corn.

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Where and by whom was the Great Eastern built, what were her dimensions and her chief voyages and where and when was she broken up?—J. G. J.

By Messrs. Scott Russell & Co., from designs made by I. K. Brunel. She was launched Jan. 31, 1858, at Millwall, England, and was 691 feet long, eighty-three feet wide, forty-eight feet deep and her tonnage was 18,915. Her only successful trips were in laying cable, and of these she made several between 1865 and 1874. Aug. 25, 1888, she was beached at New Ferry, on the Mersey, to be broken up.

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When did Queen Victoria's reign begin? 2. When did that of Edward VII begin? 3. How should I address letters to United States consuls or ambassadors to England, France, Germany and Russia?—J. W. C.

June 20, 1837. 2. Jan. 22, 1901. 3. Prefix the title "Honorable" to the name of the official, and designate him as United States ambassador, consul general, or consul, as the case may be, following with the name of the capital of the respective countries. Illustration: "The Honorable Andrew D. White, United States Ambassador, Berlin, Germany;" "Hon. William R. Holloway, United States Consul General, St. Petersburg, Russia."

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Will you give me some facts of the life of George Eliot?—F. F.

Mary Ann Evans, whose pseudoynm was George Eliot, was born in Warwickshire, England, Nov. 22, 1819, living at home, where she was well educated and strictly trained, until 1849, when her father died. Afterward she settled in London and contributed to the Westminster Review a number of remarkable articles. About this time she was known to most of the advanced thinkers of the day, and formed the union with George Henry Lewes that was the great false step of her life. Her first work of fiction appeared in 1857, and, besides her novels, she published poems and a drama. After the death of Mr. Lewes, in 1878, she married John Walter Cross. On Dec. 22, 1880, she died.

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Will you print a short history of the Military Academy at West Point?—C.

As early as 1776 a committee of the Continental Congress was appointed to prepare a plan for a military school, and in 1793 and 1796 Washington made suggestions to Congress in the same direction, but not till a bill passed March 16, 1802, was the institution founded. It was conducted on a small scale in its early years, and its real beginning dates from 1817, when Gen. Sylvanus Thayer took charge. He established many features of the academy that exist to-day. The custom of appointing cadets by districts arose early, and was made a matter of law in 1843. The monthly pay of cadets varied from $24 to $45, the latter being the present figure. From the start, to and including 1900, 3,993 cadets were graduated.

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In an article which appeared in the Journal in February W. T. Stead is quoted as saying that America has 267,190 miles of railroads while the rest of the world has but 67,280. Are the figures correct? 2. Should a gentleman remove his gloves before entering the house when calling on a lady, or wait until the glove is removed before shaking hands? 3. If not asking too much, tell one who don't know how to properly introduce people with respect to age, sex and station.

Mr. Stead is not always accurate in his statements. According to Poor's Manual of Railroads of the United States for 1901, the very best of authority, the United States has 192,161 miles of railroads. The world's railway mileage at the beginning of 1900, exclusive of the United States, is given by other good authorities as 287,739. 2. It is not now considered necessary for a gentleman to remove his glove before shaking hands with a lady. If he prefers to follow the old custom and his call is to be a short one, he can remove his right glove after entering the house. As a matter of fact, most men find the wearing of gloves so irksome, save for the purpose of protection from cold, that they seize the first excuse for removing them. 3. Introduce the younger person to the older, the gentleman to the lady, the one of lower to the one of higher station, etc., as "Mrs. Jones, allow me to present Mr. Smith." If the common, informal method of introduction, the mere "naming of names," is used the name of the lady or the older person should be mentioned first.

A "Steamship Basket."

New York Evening Post.

There is a wide range in the price for which the fruiterer will put up a "steamship basket." He can easily make it cost $40 or $50. Strangely enough, the fruits which go to make up the most expensive baskets are not the imported, but the domestic varieties out of season. Peaches at $1 each and plums at 50 cents, in the middle of winter, are more expensive than almost any of the tropical varieties brought from the Indies by steamer. Most of the hothouse fruit for the local market is raised in New Jersey, but the supply is always small, and the growers have to rely chiefly on special orders from the dealers, for there is too much uncertainty in depending upon their sale from fruit shops.

In Blindness.

When, like to one who sleeplessly at night
Writhes on his bed and prays for early dawn,
With sad eyes opened wide to useless sight,
Through age-long hours until the night is gone—
When, like to him, I hear the heedless clock
Lag through long quarters of the unchanging years,
The while these restless fingers interlock
In unshamed prayer for the relief of tears—
Lord! then, unwilling, I must worship still,
And, wronged and robbed, must still Thy debtor be
In Faith—enduring through this sorest ill—
That dawn will follow night's eternity,
The endless seasons' final hour be past,
And dead eyes waked in death to life at last!
Indianapolis. —Joseph Traxler.

A STUDY IN LICHENS

The Written Lichen and Its Varieties—Where They Are Found. Curious Resemblances. Lichens of the Buddhist Temples.

The written lichen belongs to a very large group of lichens, numbering about sixty or seventy species, all of which are distinct from other lichens and well marked to the eye, owing to their greater or less resemblance to written characters, but which blend into each other by so many intermediate states that they might well be referred to as one and the same species. Puck, in them, seems to delight in the forging of all kinds of writings, from the child's vague, shapeless scrawl to the finished calligraphy of the cultivated scholar. Sometimes the writing is as small and difficult to make out as that of Mrs. Browning or Charlotte Bronte. In some varieties the fructification is large and prominent, standing out in relief above the surface like the old Hittite characters, and surrounded by a broad and much elevated border formed of the crust. In other varieties it is intensely black, deep sunk in the crust, like the intaglio hieroglyphics on an Egyptian obelisk, and is much branched and twisted, though the ramifications keep generally at equal distances from each other like the walls of an artificial maze. The characters are so often like Eastern letters that they look as if they had been copied from them; and they combine into groups that seem like the actual words and sentences of the Koran or the Zendavesta, which a scholar might easily interpret.

The characters of the crust, too, or the material on which the Lirellae are inscribed, vary quite as much as the fructification; being generally adapted to the condition of the bark on which it occurs; being smooth and thin when the bark is of this nature, and rough and thick on the rugged bark of the oak and ash. Sometimes it is dusky brown like the leaf of a papyrus, and sometimes faint and yellow like old parchment; sometimes pure white like the finest vellum or royal court paper. And there are several forms, found principally on trees in the south of Europe, in which the crust is of a reddish hue, and the fructification of a still more brilliant cinnabar color. We might call such red-letter lichens rubrics of the forest sanctuary.

WRITTEN LICHENS.

Written lichens, like human inscriptions, are not confined to one medium of publication, if we may so call their appearance and growth in nature. They are most frequently found on the bark of trees, but they also choose for their monuments rocks of limestone and sandstone; stones built into old walls, and old mortar covering such walls. I remember a vallon or deep drift in the conglomerate formation in the neighborhood of Nice, where the walls on either side looked as if they had been built by a race of pigmies, able only to handle small stones and pebbles, and setting them above each other in little courses with the utmost regularity. These stones once formed part of an ancient geological seabeach, and the rift looked like a catacomb of inanimate objects, in which, instead of the ruins of organic life, there were the relics of extinct mountains and seas, and the records of mechanical laws and natural operations, overwhelming in their grandeur and extent. Wherever the round, smooth pebbles projected and exposed a sufficient surface to the air, their tops were covered with the white crusts and black letters of written lichens, giving them a curious tasselated appearance. Sometimes three or four species grew together, when there was a larger surface exposed than usual, each surrounded with a border line which separated it from its neighbor, and marked out its size with the utmost distinctness. These living epistles of nature covered the stones and showed how overflowing was the fullness of life, when such twilight rifts were not left unadorned by it; but they could tell us nothing of their own age, or the age of the walls on which they were engraved. They were like the Etruscan language which is now the only linguistic riddle that baffles the utmost ingenuity of the scholar to solve it. Could we interpret the mysteries which even one of these inscribed pebbles contained, what a wonderful history we should have unfolded to us! What forces unknown rounded its shape, bore it hither, and built it so compactly into the walls that I could not extract it without help of a chisel and hammer? And what was the secret of the strange life that had fastened itself to its surface, which seemed to partake of its own passivity and changelessness, and in summer's heat and winter's cold remained for years, and perhaps for centuries, the same? Who could read the "Mene, mene" written by the fingers of a hand that was viewless on these walls?

SPREADING LICHENS.

Sometimes the crust of the written lichen spreads widely where it has sufficient space and liberty, like a parchment scroll on the bark of a tree. In such a case it has no boundary lines; it fades away into the ordinary substance and color of the bark. It has the possession of a large and free existence; but when the space is limited, and a number of crustaceous lichens meeting together, contract it, the rights of the individual are also limited by the wants of the social community. Its wide-spreading growth is checked; it surrounds itself with a black border line, more or less broad and distinct, and takes care that its property is secured by landmarks which its neighbors must not remove. There are no palimpsests among the written lichens, owing to the scantiness of space and material. No individual obliterates another in order to make room for itself. The writing of each is clear and full and fills its allotted space, and no other writing is ever superimposed upon the original. Unlike the Pharaohs of old, no lichen erases the cartouche of another by its own prouder one and no vegetable caracalla covers over the inscription of his murdered brother on his monument by his own fulsome, living signature. Some written lichens, surrounded with their black borders, resemble funeral letters, as if nature herself sympathized with our humanity, in that scroll of the prophet written within and without, with lamentation and mourning, and woe which is so constantly unfolded to us in this world.

In that well-known work, "Travels in Tartary, Thibet and China," by the French Lazarists Huc and Gabet, there is a long description of a very remarkable phenomenon called the "Tree of Ten Thousand Images," found by them near the town of Koumboum, in Thibet. In an inclosure not far from the principal Buddhist Temple of this place, they saw, to their great astonishment, a huge tree which resembled a plane tree, with the bark of its trunk and branches, and the separate leaves of its luxuriant green foliage covered with well-formed Thibetan characters. They were at first suspicious of fraud by the Lamas, but after the closest scrutiny they were obliged to acknowledge the genuineness of the written characters as natural productions. Their account appears to be in some particulars indebted to an ardent imagination; but divested of its obvious embellishments and exaggerations, the extraordinary tree might, after all, be found to be only a species of plane or sycamore, covered with immense patches of the written lichens, which, as I have said, occurs in greater profusion and attains larger size in foreign countries. Many exotic and several European lichens occur on living leaves, and form a carbonaceous, beautifully sculptured crust and elegant fructification. The foliage of the Thibetan wonder may, therefore, be indebted for its singular markings to a species of Limboria, and the characters on the bark and branches may have been caused by an unknown graphis or written lichen.

These strange productions are mere freaks of nature, having only a chance, not an intended resemblance to the writing of man, and yet they have a wonderful meaning of their own.

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BATHHOUSE AND HINKY DINK.

Why They Represent Chicago's Great First Ward.

C. H., in Pittsburg Dispatch.

Bathhouse John, of Chicago, has been reelected alderman of the First ward. This appears to surprise a great many people who lately have been indulging in learned discussions of the recent reform wave in municipal politics. It doesn't surprise me at all. I know "Jawn." I know Chicago. And, what is more to the purpose, I know the First ward. "The Bath" and Hinky Dink have represented that ward from time out of mind, and will probably continue to do so indefinitely. So far as I can see nothing but sudden death can ever stop them. No political conditions similar to that of the First ward of Chicago exists anywhere else on earth within my knowledge. The square mile bounded by the lake, the river and Twelfth street in the Windy City probably represents as much wealth as any equal piece of territory in the world. It is the great, throbbing heart of Chicago. Within its borders are the ten leading hotels, the Board of Trade, the Stock Exchange, the produce markets, all the newspapers, the Woman's Temple, the Art Institute and all the first-class theaters. Commercially it is more important than most of the South American republics. Yet this compact realm of wealth and culture is represented by Bathhouse John and Hinky Dink. This, of course, will strike you as an anomaly, assuming that you know what manner of men these two are. For those who don't a swift sketch may not be out of place.

Nature designed John Coughlan for a rubber in a bathhouse, but capricious fate jerked him from that calling and made an alderman of him. He is a great, fat fellow, with no more education than a chimpanzee. He is endowed with a ready wit of a clownish kind, a good tenor voice and an inexhaustible supply of gall. He is given to wearing excitable trousers and vests that contain all the colors of the spectrum, together with the various combinations thereof. For colored porters and race-track touts he is the glass of fashion and the mold of form. He is fond of running around to the summer resorts and appearing in a new suit of scenery every hour. Within the past two years he has composed a couple of sentimental songs, which has given him a unique celebrity as a song-writing alderman.

John started as a bathhouse keeper, later opened "The Silver Dollar" saloon and is now a banker. He always votes for measures put forward by corporations, and some are harsh enough to put this fact and his suddenly acquired wealth into unpleasant connections. But Jawn doesn't mind this. He has a hide like a hippopotamus and never resents a charge of corruption. In the Council chamber he is tremendously serious, but the press has placed the cap and bells on his head and his colleagues always laugh at his speeches.

Hinky Dink, who divides the honor of representing the First ward with Bathhouse John, first gained fame as a polisher of pedal teguments. Later he acquired a half interest in a barrel house, and from thence his road to fame was easy. He is a diminutive fellow and very taciturn. While Bathhouse has gained fame as an oracle, Hinky has won his as a sphinx. He prefers to let Jawn do the talking, while he devotes himself to the fine work. Their relations are harmonious and each aids the other at election time. These are the two men who represent the great First ward of Chicago. Why they do it and why they will probably continue to do so is not far to seek.

There are about five thousand adult males in the ward who never vote. These are the hotel residents, who, in the flux of business, never live long enough in one place to get their names on the registry books. Although during the day the ward has an approximate population of 400,000, when night comes practically all of this number take the elevated trains to their homes in the outlying wards and suburbs. Then the nonvoting hotel element, the various little Greek and Italian communities, the negro quarter and the denizens of the levee are practically all that is left. These underworld elements are easily organized for political purposes. The Greek must have his license to peddle fruit. This he secures through the favor of the alderman. For this he gives his vote. The Italians must have work in the street-cleaning department. Bathhouse and Hinky Dink have both learned how to evade the civil-service law, and every year in the spring they put hundreds of these fellows to work on the city's payroll. All-night saloon keepers are held in terror of having their licenses revoked if they fail to fall into line, and their porters, bar clerks and hangers-on are influenced through them. The very small "respectable" vote in the ward is disorganized, and seldom thinks of opposition. The Civic Federation and the Municipal Voters' League, as well as the reform newspapers, have frequently tried to rid the City Council of this queer pair, but with each attempt they have triumphantly returned with increased majorities. This last triumph for Bathhouse John is only the capstone of a long series of similar ones. Next spring Hinky Dink will run and probably get a bigger majority.

Not a Worshiper of the Cow.

Washington Letter in New York World.

Sunsets, scenery, love, war, hate or beautiful women fail to move this Congress to poetry, but the cow scores every time. Dolliver, Dougherty and a dozen more have rhapsodized over the cow in House or Senate. No senator, except Spooner, who rises to speak in favor of the oleomargarine bill fails to get poetical, either about the cow or about butter. Spooner's colleague, Quarles, had his turn at it the other day.

"Ah, Mr. President," said Quarles, "Butter! Butter! It is distilled in the crucibles of nature under the summer sky, in field and meadow, where the bobolink and the bee practice their sweet incantations."

Then came Spooner.

"I am no demagogue," he said. "I shall not poetize about the cow. I wasn't born down on the farm, and I probably know less about farming than any man in the Senate."

"Did you have a hand in this assault?"

Accomplice—Naw, not exactly, but I soaked him in de ribs wid me foot when he was down.

SURE TO BE A FIGHT.

Teacher—Suppose there were four boys going skating, and they only had two pairs of skates, how many boys would have to look on?

Bobby—The two that got licked.